

## Introduction

- Reflexive *se/si* morphology can appear on various verb types in Romance, e.g. causative alternation verbs (*s'allumer* 'to turn on'), naturally reflexive verbs (*se laver* 'to wash')

- Periphrastic *faire* causatives in French permit the embedded verb to be marked with *se*; however Italian has a ban on *fare \*si* (Burzio 1981; Zubizarreta 1985)

(1) a. *Marie a fait s'allumer la lampe.* (French)  
Marie has made REFL=turn.on the lamp  
'Marie made the lamp turn on.'

b. *Marie a fait allumer la lampe.*  
Marie has made turn.on the lamp  
'Marie had someone turn on the lamp.'

(2) *Maria ha fatto accendere(\*si) la lampada.* (Italian)  
Maria has made turn.on(\*=REFL) the lamp

### Research question and hypotheses

**Question:** What is the interpretation of causative alternation and naturally reflexive verbs under *faire/fare* in French and Italian? Interplay of two factors:

**Morphological disambiguation:** Interpretation under *faire/fare* is determined by the choice of *se/si* morphology when available. Prediction: *se*-marking disambiguates when possible

- Italian *fare \*si*: no disambiguation is available; thus any interpretation should be possible (Zubizarreta 1985)

**Lexical bias:** Interpretation under *faire/fare* is determined by lexical biases of the verb. Prediction: Verb class matters

- Influence of argument structure frequency (Haspelmath 1993, Heidinger 2015) and lexical semantics, e.g. for reflexive verbs (Kemmer 1993, Zribi-Hertz 1982)

## Discussion

- Evidence for both factors: **Morphological disambiguation** > **Lexical bias**
- Effect of **Morphological disambiguation**: *se/si* morphology, when present, forces reflexive and intransitive interpretations of the embedded verb
- Effect of **Lexical bias**: In unmarked contexts, the lexical properties of the verb shine through
- For some verb types, reflexive *se/si* morphology may simply be a morphological flag for lexical information already encoded in the verb root
- Embedding under *faire/fare* is a useful probe into the lexical bias of verbs
- Ongoing: Replication in Spanish, which exhibits 'reflexive drop' under *hacer* (Kempchinsky 2004, Armstrong 2011, Cuervo 2017)
- Future: What is the source of Italian *fare \*si* and optional French and Spanish *faire/hacer se*?

**Selected References:** Armstrong, G. 2011. *Two classes of transitive verbs: evidence from Spanish*. Georgetown PhD dissertation. • Kempchinsky, P. 2004. Romance SE as an aspectual element. In *Contemporary Approaches to Romance Linguistics*. • Heidinger, S. 2015. Causality and the encoding of the causative-anticausative alternation in French and Spanish. *Journal of Linguistics* 51. • Kemmer, S. E. 1993. *The Middle Voice*. • Zribi-Hertz, A. 1982. La construction 'se-moyen' et son statut dans le triangle moyen-passif-réfléchi. *Linguisticae Investigationes* 6. • Zubizarreta, M. L. 1985. The Relation between Morphophonology and Morphosyntax: The Case of Romance Causatives. *Linguistic Inquiry* 16.

## Experiment I: Naturally reflexive verbs

### Method

- French ( $N=77$  p.s): 8 naturally reflexive verbs (4 *se*-marked, 4 unmarked), 8 non-reflexive verbs (4 *se*-marked, 4 unmarked) verbs

- (3) a. **Target:** Jamal a fait (se) laver Paul.  
Lit: 'Jamal made (se) wash Paul.'
- b. **Question:** Qui est le plus susceptible d'avoir lavé Paul?  
'Who is the most likely to have washed Paul?'
- c. **Object answer:** Paul lui-même 'Paul himself' / **Subject answer:** Jamal / **Causee answer:** Quelqu'un d'autre 'Someone else'

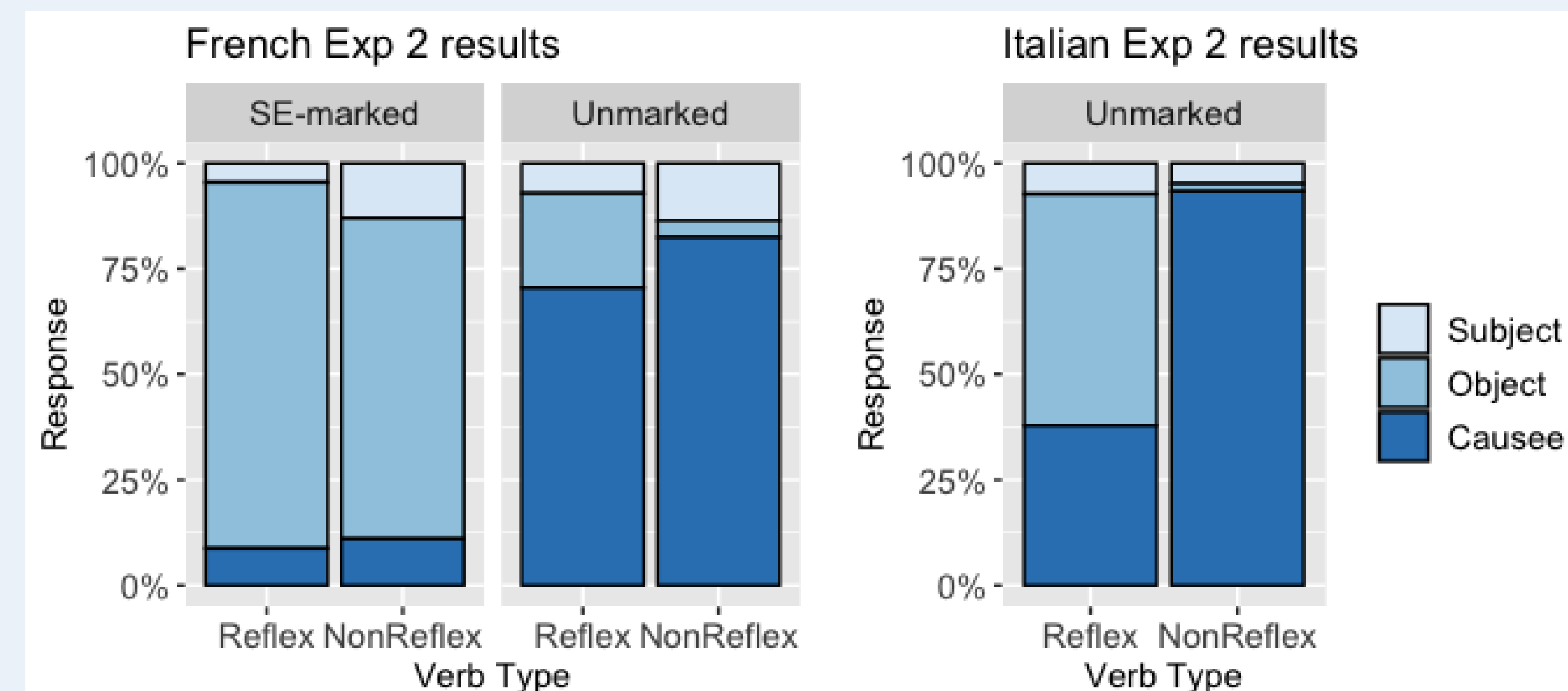
- Italian ( $N=41$  p.s): 8 naturally reflexive verbs, 8 non-reflexive verbs (all unmarked)

- (4) a. **Target:** Riccardo ha fatto lavare Paolo.  
b. **Question:** Chi è più probabile che abbia lavato Paolo?  
c. **Object answer:** Paolo stesso / **Subject answer:** Riccardo / **Causee answer:** Qualcun altro

### Predictions for the Morphological disambiguation and Lexical factors

Language	se-marking	Verb class	REFLEXIVE Object answer	NON-REFLEXIVE Causee answer
French	se-marked	reflexive	✓	✗
		non-reflexive	✓	✗
French	unmarked	reflexive	✗	✓
		non-reflexive	✗	✓
Italian	unmarked	reflexive	✓	✓
		non-reflexive	✓	✓

### Results



- Morphological disambiguation:** *se*-marked verbs were interpreted as reflexive more often than unmarked verbs
- Lexical bias:** Naturally reflexive verbs received reflexive interpretations even when unmarked, including in French where disambiguation is available
  - Lexical bias is amplified when morphology does not disambiguate, as in Italian

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## Experiment II: Causative alternation verbs

### Method

- 3 classes based on obligatoriness of *se* marking
- French ( $N=75$  p.s): 8 *−se* verbs (all unmarked), 8 *+se* verbs (4 *se*-marked, 4 unmarked), 8 *±se* verbs (4 *se*-marked, 4 unmarked)

Verb class	INTRANSITIVE	TRANSITIVE
<i>−se</i>	sécher ↑	sécher ↓
<i>+se</i>	s'allumer ↓	allumer ↑
<i>±se</i>	(se) casser	casser

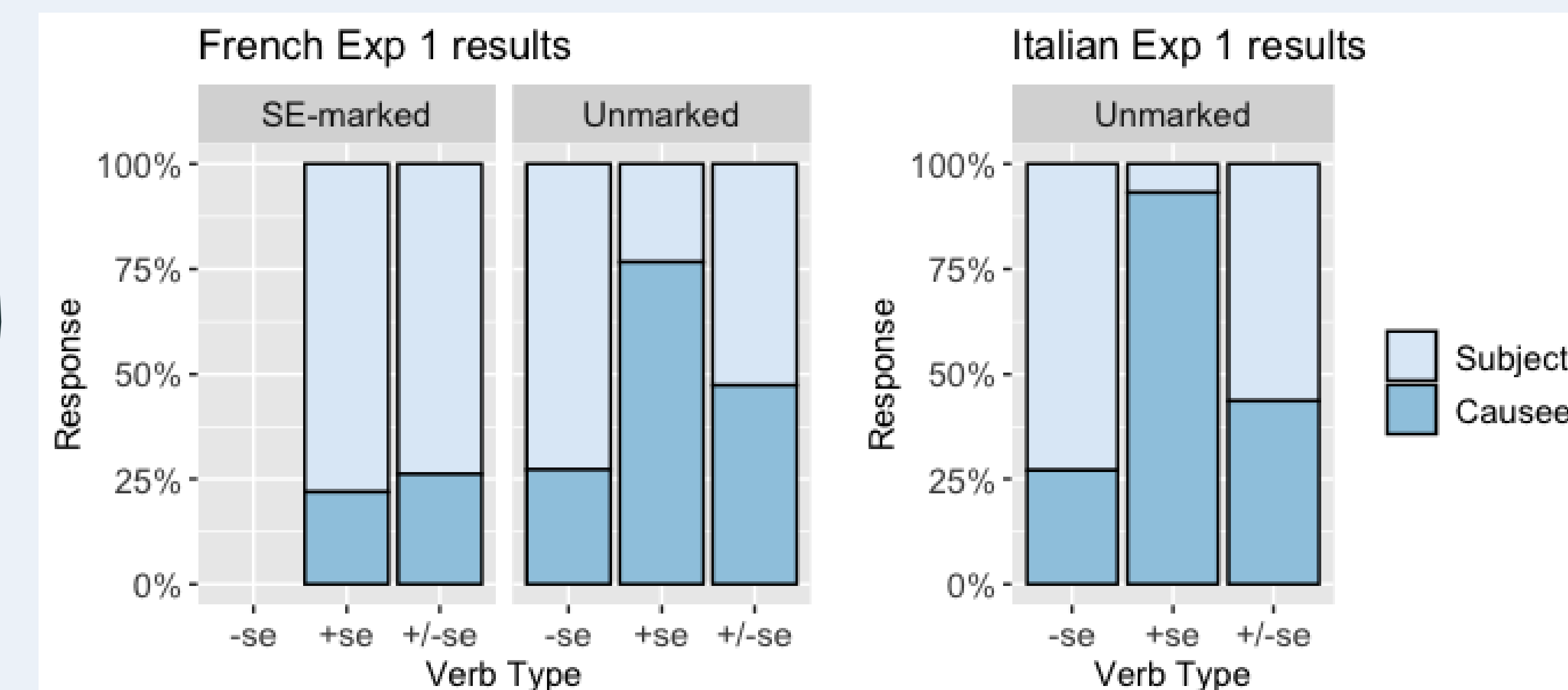
- (5) a. **Target:** Silvia a fait (s')allumer la lampe.  
Lit: 'Silvia made (se) turn on the lamp.'
- b. **Question:** Qui est le plus susceptible d'avoir allumé la lampe?  
'Who is more likely to have turned on the lamp?'
- c. **Subject answer:** Silvia / **Causee answer:** Quelqu'un d'autre 'Someone else'
- Italian ( $N=38$  p.s): 8 *−se* verbs, 8 *+se* verbs, 8 *±se* verbs (all unmarked)

- (6) a. **Target:** Silvia ha fatto accendere la lampada.  
b. **Question:** Chi è più probabile che abbia acceso la lampada?  
c. **Subject answer:** Silvia / **Causee answer:** Qualcun altro

### Predictions for the Morphological disambiguation and Lexical factors

Language	se-marking	Verb class	INTRANSITIVE Subject answer	TRANSITIVE Causee answer
French	se-marked	<i>+se</i>	✓	✗
		<i>±se</i>	✓	✗
French	unmarked	<i>−se</i>	✓	✓
		<i>+se</i>	✗	✓
		<i>±se</i>	✓	✓
Italian	unmarked	<i>−se</i>	✓	✓
		<i>+se</i>	✓	✓
		<i>±se</i>	✓	✓

### Results



- Morphological disambiguation:** Marked *+se* and *±se* verbs were preferentially intransitive
- Lexical bias:** All 3 verb classes differed significantly from e.o. when unmarked, in both languages
  - Preferred interpretations of unmarked verbs reflected frequency in matrix contexts
  - Unmarked *−se* verbs were preferentially intransitive
  - Unmarked *+se* verbs were preferentially transitive (equal to transitive controls) even in Italian, where morphological disambiguation is not available
  - Lexical bias is amplified when morphology does not disambiguate